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the extreme variability of the Sipunculids in external appearance, and the difficulty of specific determination. In *Sipunculus australis* the so-called hooks on the introvert were found to be actually only thickened cuticular ridges, elevated like rolls above the surface; and though characteristic, these structures do not warrant the statement of various authors as to the occasional presence of hooks in this genus. While the large collections of Sipunculids made by Semper, Sluiter, and others, in the Philippine and Malay archipelagoes, have yielded a knowledge of the group in these regions superior to that from other tropical seas, still Shipley is inclined to look upon the Malay archipelago as the center for this group, from which it has spread east along southern Asia to the Red Sea, and outward over the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The abundance, particularly of certain species, in this territory is to be associated with the prevalence of coral reefs over the area.

H. B. W.

The Palolo Worm. — The long-existing ignorance concerning this interesting annelid that comes to the surface of the ocean during the third quarter of the moon in October and November, in the Samoan and Fiji islands, has recently been somewhat diminished by the independent researches of Friedländer¹ and of Krämer.²

We seem now pretty certain that the creature comes from shallow water — not from mysterious depths; that it lives in dead coral masses; that it casts off the main part of the body to swim free and discharge eggs and sperm when ripe, while the head end probably remains in the coral to regenerate. The suggestion that it is the combined warmth of the sun with least tides that brings on this maturity at a particular phase of the moon seems in the right direction; still we remain ignorant of the real cause of this exact periodicity in reproduction. We are not absolutely sure of the genus to which the creature belongs — despite the fact that so many Europeans have noted its appearance, and that it occurs so abundantly that the natives make its capture for food a set feast, and have incorporated its habits in their folk-lore.

E. A. A.

Is Fertilization a Process of Feeding? — N. Iwanzow³ describes remarkable pseudopodia and tufts of filous threads sent out by *miniature* eggs of a helothurian to seize and engulf spermatozoa. In two

¹ *Biolog. Centralblatt.*, vol. xviii, May, 1898.

² *Ibid.*, vol. xix, January, 1899.

³ *Bul. Soc. Imp. Nat. de Moscou*, Nr. 3, 1897.